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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
<http://forums.delphiforums.com/m/main.asp?sigdir=atari>

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~ New Spam-Blocker Shown ~ People Are Talking! ~ ATOS Mag Stops News!
 ~ Web-Filtering Lawsuit! ~ How To Prevent Spam! ~ Songbird/CGE News!
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 -* Privacy Groups Urge Use States' Common Law *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard
 "~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

With just one day of typical hot, hazy and humidity to remind us it's still summer, it was another perfect week here in the northeast. It doesn't get much better than this! Ahhhh, to be a kid again and really be able to enjoy these summer months with no responsibilities.

Speaking of reminiscing, the other day I was thinking back about the "good old Atari days" and I couldn't believe that it's been almost ten years since Atari was still around doing something. Then I started thinking about all the great times I used to have running the BBS, visiting our few dealers, pawing over the new software and magazines, the AtariFests, the online activity on services such as GENie, CompuServe, Delphi and the like - and wondered where the time has gone.

Most of those activities are gone and just a memory these days. Sure, there are many of us who still use Atari computers, and perhaps other systems as well. New software is barely existent. Dealers? Well, there are a few around still although storefront sites are rare, if any. But, there is still some excitement left in the Atari community and some visible activity around, although fragmented. There is the Atari newsgroups on the usenet. A number of web sites are available. It's not the same as yesteryear, but there is some satisfaction knowing that the people are still out there.

As many of you know, I happen to run the Atari Forum on Delphi - or DelphiForums as it is known today. Yes, it's fairly quiet there these days because the service isn't accessible to Atari-using users. Still, there are a number of people who use multiple computer platforms and have the capability to enjoy our forum - and many do. Being active online for these past many years, I've noticed a lot of grumbling from the community regarding places for Atari users to "congregate" online, exchange ideas, and do some without worrying about the various online "trolls" we've all experienced over the years. Having a moderated area has been something that's been lacking. Seeing and hearing these complaints, I've always wondered why more people didn't add Delphi to their circle of sites to visit, especially since access to it and all of the other forums are free. Maybe people aren't aware. Maybe people feel that Atari forums should be accessible with Atari computers. I really don't know.

So, I thought that since I was in a "down memory lane" kind of mood, I

figured that I should remind people that there are still online sites still available for us to visit and discuss our favorite computer system and more. The Atari Advantage forum on DelphiForums still caters to the Atari user. Message discussions are moderated regularly and the trolls can be dealt with effectively. People like "Sinclap" would not be tolerated unless they adhered to common courtesies that we've come to expect in online communities. So, if you're of the mind to do so, drop by and say hello, ask a question, start a message thread, or just see what's happening. To get there, just go to: <http://forums.delphiforums.com/m/main.asp?sigdir=atari> and register. It's free for basic use - you can't beat that price! Also, it's a good place to learn about other areas on the web that support Atari users. On that note, I'll return to my daydreaming of yesteryear!

Until next time...

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HighWire 0.07A Public Preview Released!

The HighWire Development Team has released a new HighWire v0.07A Public Preview.

This release has the first implementation of CSS attribute STYLE of some HTML tags, read the full change.log or History.txt on the HighWire site for more details.

Here is a partial list of changes in V.07 alpha of July 24, 2002:

- Margin settings of <frame> and are implemented now (default is 5px).
- < HR > tags are now correctly calculated in position and size.
- Very first implementation of CSS attribute STYLE of some HTML tags.
- For the color and the background - color can be set with the CSS style attribute.
- Lots of smaller glitches fixed.

Download links are on the HighWire site.

HighWire Development Team
<http://highwire.atari-users.net>

HighWire Preview Releases an Explanation

Hello everyone, we have had the question come up as to why there is a preview version of 0.06 but not a full release. And why call them previews and not releases etc.

Hopefully I can explain the idea and dispel some of the confusion.

In reality there are 2 types of releases at the moment, "Full" and "Alpha". The "Full" releases have been 0.01 - 0.05, currently 0.06 and 0.07 are "Alpha" releases.

What's the difference?

A "Full" release has had the supporting documentation formally reviewed with additions, an update to the Developers Letter and a Feature Freeze period for a bit of formal testing before they are made public.

An "Alpha" release may or may not have had the documentation updated, haven't had the Developers Letter updated and there has been no Feature Freeze testing period.

What's the Real difference?

As far as stability goes, there have been no major differences between "Full" and "Alpha" versions. Testing goes on constantly and it's just as likely for a bug to become apparent after a "Full" release as it is to happen after an "Alpha" release.

Why the change?

A full release takes a period of a week or more to formalize and get released. This is a week where little coding can take place and most of the time is spent on bug patching and documentation. At this stage in the development it was decided by several members of the team that it would be to everyone's advantage, if coding were not frozen quite as often and developments allowed to occur at a faster pace. We believe that is something that everyone would like to see. So we went with the "Alpha" release strategy.

What is the version numbering convention?

This has been a subject of some confusion by members of the development team as well as the public. This will be standardized in the following manner at the "Full" version 0.1.0 release. Currently all versions that have been released have been of the format 0.0#, this will be amended to a bit easier to understand 0.0.#. So currently the version number would be actually represented as 0.0.7. There have been omissions of one of the 0's in the past and this has led to a bit of confusion. We apologize for that.

Plans....

At the moment, the 'unofficial' plans are to run through versions 0.0.8 and 0.0.9 as "Alpha" releases, with a "Full" release coming at version 0.1.0. When we reach this point then we will probably continue with "Full" releases coming when appropriate to the development status and "Alpha" releases occurring in the intermediate periods. Full releases will be noted by the increment of the second digit, 0.1.0, 0.2.0, 0.3.0 etc... Alpha versions need not be a total of 10, they can be more or less as is needed for the current focuses of development. It's possible that there will be 14 alpha releases of one minor version "Full" release, but only 3 alpha releases of another "Full" release.

Hopefully I've eliminated some of the confusion and created no more. In all effects 'preview' or "Alpha" versions are just as stable as "Full" releases, and no one should be discouraged to use them because of the wording of "preview" or "Alpha" in the title of the release. All this really means is

that the programmers have decided they would rather spend their time programming on HighWire, instead of agonizing over the grammar in their new documentation.

Dan Ackerman
aka baldrick

HighWire Development team member

<http://highwire.atari-users.net>

New N.AES Coming Soon!

www.ST-Computer.net is reporting..

Woller Systems announced a new version of N.AES definitely for the autumn of 2002 in a discussion with the editors of ST-Computers. In the current phase, users of the elegant AES system for MiNT should contact the developers for improvement suggestions.

Woller Systems has also updated there website.

<http://www.woller.com/>

More Algo-comp from TAMW Released

Tim posted in comp.sys.atari.st...

Hi All:

More Atari-MIDI programs released!

Wolfgang Martin Stroh: Algorithmic Package Page
About 28 programs in all!

<http://tamw.atari-users.net/algo.htm>

When you see these screen shots, I know that you will be impressed! I was! These are great programs well worth looking into. They work in Steem as well. It would be best to print out the page as a sort of manual/guide unless you know German , as the docs are in that language.

Also!!(just when you thought it was safe) The MOZART DICE WATZ page!

<http://tamw.atari-users.net/mozart.htm>

This is a neat algorithmic program based on Mozart's Dice Waltz composition. Fun and educational as well.

<http://tamw.atari-users.net>

ATOS Magazine News Coverage Stopped

Roughly translated from the www.atos-magazin.de site (Thanks to AltF4)...

ATOS Magazine, a great German language Atari site is stopping it's Atari News coverage due the lack of new articles and personal time, but the news archive will stay online at <http://www.mindrup.de/atos/>

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I want to talk about a couple of things this time around, but none of them are particularly Atari-oriented.

First of all, can someone out there with Mac experience point me in the direction of a text editor for OS X that will actually do word-wrapping correctly?

I've been looking around for something that will do the job correctly, but so far every application I've tried has disappointed me.

I can remember a time several years ago when any programmer who could put two lines of code together for the Mac thought that they should become millionaires from it. Things seem to be better now, with many applications available as either freeware or shareware, but there still seems to be a shortage of good, solid text editors in those two categories. So if you know of a good no-frills text editor for OS X, please drop me a line. Something that compares to STeno would be just about perfect!

Next up is the SETI@home TEAM ATARI search group. Evidently, you didn't think that searching the cosmos for an alien intelligence was important, because there haven't been any new additions to the group lately. The 51 members of Team Atari have so far contributed 91 years of CPU time in the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. It's really easy to participate, it doesn't cost you anything, and you might just end up being the one who discovers that first signal from an intelligence outside of our solar system! Wouldn't that be cool?

I'm not going to lie to you... the chances of this project finding a signal are unknown right now... we've got nothing to compare it to. And even if the project does find a signal, there are more than 3.8 million other people participating. But winning probably isn't the reason that you should join up. If you're considering joining up, do it because it's a really cool project and it'd be great to be able to say that you participated.

If you're interested, check out <http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu> for information on SETI@home in general, and http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu/stats/team/team_21046.html for info about Team Atari. We can't promise you fame or fortune, but it'd be the

coolest thing imaginable to be able to say that the first signal from ET was found by an Atari user!!

Well, let's get to the news, hints, tips, and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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Walter Cole asks about emulating an STE:

Is it possible to emulate an Atari STe on a PC solely with software?
If it is, where on the WWW may I find it?

I've been an ST user since 1986, but find the PC's access to the Internet too much easier to use."

Jonathan Mortimer tells Walter:

"Little Green Desktop is a good place to visit, search for them in Google. STEEM is probably the best emulator around, in my opinion."

Lannie Schafroth adds:

"Go to The Little Green Desktop. <http://www.atari.st>
They have a emulators section. Steem is the best right now. gemulator is good only for applications. Games are out. Steem seems to run the most. Also check out: <http://aranyrn.sophics.cz/index.html> still in early stages, but looking great."

Edward Baiz jumps in and adds:

"You want to try Pacifist. It can load in the various roms from 1.0 to 2.6.

<http://www.pacifist.fatal-design.com/>

<http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Corridor/8458/>

<http://members.optusnet.com.au/~ataril/> "

Paul Caillet adds:

"Look at there:
<http://music-atari.org/atari/emul/> "

Walter now posts:

"I have downloaded STEem and TOS 2.06 and am ready to try to emulate my 1040STe on my PC. But I have one problem: How do I get my Atari files on to my PC hard drive, since my PC floppy won't read my Atari disks? And assuming I can move files, is there any ready way to move

files from my Atari hard drives to the PC without putting them on floppies first?"

Dave Wade asks Walter:

"What type of programs are these? Games or productivity programs. If they are normal programs then a couple of suggestions.

1. If you go to the <http://www.emulators.com/download.htm> and flip down to the utilities at the bottom then you will find Gemulator Explorer which will allow you to read some disks on the PC (if you have Windows 95,98 or ME, not so good on NT, 2000 or XP) and copy them to hard disk.

2. There is a program called PARCP
<http://www.manualy.sk/parcp/parcp.html>
which allows you to copy with a modified printer cable. I have used this and its pretty quick

If they are games then look around the Atari FTP sites and you may find a copy someone else has already migrated for you..."

Bob Retelle tells Walter:

"Your PC floppy drive CAN read Atari floppies, IF you format the floppies on the PC.

(There are other ways, this is just the simplest.)

Note that you MUST format the floppies as 720K disks, NOT the default 1.44M. (There is a dropdown on the main Format page to select 720K when you format.)

It works best on "true" DoubleSided floppies, NOT the "standard" 1.44 Meg High Density floppies, but it may work with HD disks. Use one of your regular Atari floppies to be sure.

Format the disk on your PC, then copy the Atari files onto them. Your PC should have no problems reading the files.

(The PC and Atari floppy disk format is almost exactly the same. The Atari format differs by a few bytes, which makes the PC unable to read them. Formatting on the PC avoids this and allows BOTH systems to read and write the disks.)

You can also connect the SERIAL ports of the ST and PC together using a NULL MODEM cable and XMODEM (or YMODEM or ZMODEM, or whatever) the files across. You'll need a terminal program on each computer with a compatible download protocol."

Mickael Pointer adds:

"Anyway, I have to add precisions:

1) Yes, a PC can read/write 720k floppy disks. Unfortunately, most Atari user used to format their floppy with programs that allows up to 10 sectors per track and 82 tracks per side... and most PC are not able to read or write correctly this type of format.

- 2) You can use HD disk without problem, just think about filling the HD detection hole. Put some non-transparent tape on it (or a piece of floppy sticker), and tadaaaaa... it's now recognized as a true DD floppy.
- 3) The few bytes of difference are only true for STF. This has been corrected with the release of the Rainbow Tos (1.62 and upper) that equipped the STE machines."

Walter replies to those who responded:

"Thanks to all for their help with my problem of getting my files and applications on to my PC. Since I have skads of files 80/10, I'll have to copy these on to 79/9 floppies. My many applications are likely on the lower density formats and should load on to the PC OK. I hope it will be worth the effort. I'll concentrate on some important Data Manager files and the Protex word processor (which is just as useful and a lot more straight forward than MS Word).

STeem looks pretty good and the Haywards should be congratulated."

Lannie Schafroth asks about installing EasyMiNT:

"When I run the install it says it needs a raw partition. I am using ARAnyM 0.1.7 for Windows.

How do I create the partitions for this install? I'm just experimenting. I've never used Mint before."

Edward Baiz tells Lannie:

"When I installed it, I created a "LNX" partition. You need to run your hard drive utility software and create that type of partition."

Stanislav Opichal adds:

"Normally create a partition of a size you want and then change the partition type to RAW (e.g. using HDTOOLS.APP from HDDRIVER). Remember, to run FreeMiNT. You need to use HDDRIVER from Uwe Seimet, because it is the only one that is XHDI compatible."

Lannie takes in the provided info and replies:

"I tried HDDriver (demo) and it crashes the program at the SCSI check point during boot."

Stan Opichal replies:

"Yes, the SCSI is not implemented in ARAnyM. You should not do any operations that touches SCSI. In HDDRIVER you can set the devices to be tested during the boot to IDE only devices which is the case you need.

Please, subscribe to the aranym-user mailing list to let other users read the solutions and archive this mails."

Edward Baiz asks for help with setting up his Milan to access a cable modem:

"Since I will be using a cable modem, I have started to use GlueStik. However when I try to use it with Newsie, Newsie locks up my computer when I try to access the various address books or mail boxes. I have the same problem when I try to do the same thing without having the Hades's memory split into ST and TT ram. Splitting the ram solved my Newsie problem. Now, in order to get things to work I have to install STiK instead of GlueStik. Just wondering if anyone has ideas or else experiencing the same thing."

Ekkehard Flessa tells Edward:

"I've had a problem with Newsie on my Milan, too: accessing ftp servers by double-clicking them in the list would crash. Marking them with the mouse and hitting return, however, would work. Perhaps you could try this."

Peter Slegg asks for help with his Milan's sound system:

"More or less ever since I have had this Milan I have had a problem with the sound system.

It works perfectly most of the time and then suddenly with no error message and with no obvious cause it stops working and there is no more sound output.

For example. If I play sound files via Aniplayer it suddenly stops making sound but otherwise it continues playing files as though everything is working. The only hint of a problem comes from the percentage indicator in the Aniplayer window which starts displaying values like 15%, 109%, 14%, 127%, etc.

It's not just Aniplayer that is affected though, once the sound system is broken, GEMJing is silent too. I have found that I can usually cause the problem to appear by moving the slider in the Aniplayer window but it also appears when using GEMJing.

The only thing that fixes the problem is a reboot which obviously re-initialises something.

I feel that the problem is in the software between the application and the hardware. I tried upgrading to a later version of the MilanBlaster software but that made no difference.

I increased the amount of ST-Ram to 14Mb as I read that using less could cause problems with the Soundblaster driver.

I am using Mint and NAES 1.2, do either of these have any affect on the sound system?

This may be unrelated but I see on acp.atari.org that there is a new pci-bios for the Hades is there any benefit in using this on the Milan?"

Clement Benrabahn tells Peter:

"Try this to avoid a reboot: open the Soundblaster Mixer and click on Reset."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Level 3 To Provide Xbox Online Support!
 " Songbird/CGE News!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Level 3 Says to Provide Xbox Online Infrastructure

Level 3 Communications Inc., the high-speed networking company that recently brought Warren Buffett on as an investor, said on Monday it will provide infrastructure services for Microsoft Corp.'s Xbox Live online gaming service.

Xbox Live, which is set to launch later this year after beta tests this summer, is part of Microsoft's multibillion-dollar video gaming strategy and also part of the company's strategy for linking broadband networking and home entertainment services.

Buffett, part of a group which invested \$500 million in Broomfield, Colorado-based Level 3 two weeks ago, is an old friend of Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates.

Under the deal, terms of which were not disclosed, Level 3 will provide Internet access and private network services for Xbox Live, a subscription service that will cost \$49 for the first year.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!

Songbird Celebrates CGE Fifth Anniversary

July 24, 2002

For immediate release:

ROCHESTER, MN -- Songbird Productions is once again proud to be a part of this year's Classic Gaming Expo (CGE), which takes place in Las Vegas, NV, on August 10-11. To honor the show's fifth anniversary this year, Songbird has produced a limited number of Jaguar and Lynx collectables which provide a retrospective on the shows from the last four years.

The Jaguar CGE 5th CD features a slide show of digitized pictures from World of Atari 98 all the way to CGE2K1; nearly 50 full-screen, high-color photos are included in this collection. This CD will play on any consumer Jaguar CD unit which utilizes a JagFree CD compatible cartridge, such as Protector SE.

The Lynx CGE 5th cartridge also features a slide show of over a dozen digitized pictures from CGE's past. This is made possible by use of a brand new high-color display engine which allows pictures with dozens or even hundreds of colors to be displayed with amazingly vibrant color and clarity on the Lynx screen.

Only 60 of each commemorative item will be produced, so be sure to get to the Songbird booth at CGE right away to secure your copy. Also check out other recent Songbird releases, including Protector SE, CyberVirus, and the brand new Phase Zero Demo cartridge. The latter is an impressive, playable demo which includes at least five missions for you to explore and conquer, and is a great addition to any Jaguar fan's collection. Skyhammer and the Rapid Fire Controller should also be back in stock just in time for the show.

For the latest details on ticket pricing, directions, and special guests and events at CGE, please visit the CGE website at <http://www.cgexpo.com>.

Songbird Productions is the premier developer and publisher for the Atari Lynx and Jaguar. To keep up to date with the latest news at Songbird Productions, be sure to visit the company web site at <http://songbird.atari.net>. JagFree CD is copyright and trademark 2001 Songbird Productions. All rights reserved. This message may be reprinted in its entirety.

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Intel Readies Earlier Rollout of 3.0 Ghz Pentium 4

Intel Corp. is moving up the introduction of its Pentium 4 processor running at 3.0 gigahertz, an industry source said on Monday, as the world's largest chipmaker looks to tap the benefits of efficiencies in its chip manufacturing.

Santa Clara, California-based Intel, the world's No. 1 chip maker, now plans to have the processor to PC makers in time for the year-end holiday shopping season, the source said.

Intel had planned to introduce the 3.0 gigahertz Pentium 4 processor, the brains of a personal computer, by the end of the year. In addition, Intel also is accelerating the introduction of its Pentium 4 running at 2.80 gigahertz, bringing that product rollout to the third quarter, compared with a prior introduction date in the fourth quarter.

When Intel introduces new chips, it typically drops prices on the Pentium and Celeron processors it already has on the market. The accelerated introductions also put Intel farther ahead of its rival, Advanced Micro Devices Inc., in terms of the clock speed of its processors.

By the of the current, third quarter, Intel will be selling a Pentium 4 chip running at 2.8 gigahertz, compared with 1.8 gigahertz for AMD, with its Athlon processors.

PayPal Enhances Services with Stamps.com Deal

Expanding its service offerings as it awaits eBay's buyout, PayPal said it will begin offering users direct access to U.S. postage through an alliance with Stamps.com.

The two companies said the new service, which will let users buy and print U.S. Postal Service stamps through their PayPal accounts, will be in place in time for the holiday season.

That is about the same time that eBay expects to close its planned US\$1.5 billion acquisition of PayPal, which has sparked its share of controversy.

The Stamps.com program is aimed at beefing up PayPal's shipping services, which debuted last month. Those services let PayPal users include shipping costs in the price they pay for items, most notably products purchased through auctions on eBay.

According to PayPal, 15,000 users took advantage of its new shipping service during the first month.

"Since many of PayPal's sellers have a strong preference to ship via the U.S. Postal Service, our integration with Stamps.com should further increase the popularity of PayPal shipping products," said Peter Ashley, PayPal's director of business development.

The news came on the eve of PayPal's second-quarter earnings announcement, which is being closely watched because it could have a strong impact on the company's stock price.

Because eBay's offer to buy PayPal comes with a fixed exchange ratio, the deal's value is tied to eBay's share price. At the time the acquisition was announced, PayPal shares were at \$23.61, well below the company's recent high of \$30, a mark reached shortly after PayPal made bullish comments about its second-quarter earnings and revenue growth.

"PayPal is a growth story, and investors responded to that," Morningstar.com analyst George Nichols told the E-Commerce Times.

Stamps.com, meanwhile, has quietly written its own dot-com survival story. Left for dead in the midst of the shakeout, Stamps.com has seen its share price rise to \$4.10, largely on the strength of its business partnerships with Microsoft and HP, among others.

Just last week, Stamps.com announced that the U.S. Postal Service has approved its NetStamps printable stamps product, making it the first vendor cleared for that use.

"This feature promises to dramatically increase the convenience and hence the value proposition of the Stamps.com service," said Stamps.com CEO Ken McBride.

The new alliance with PayPal - and by extension, eBay - can only help solidify the company.

EBay Rolls Out Fixed-Price Format

Internet trading leader eBay Inc. increased its shift toward fixed-price sales Monday by launching a new format that lets buyers and sellers skip traditional auctions entirely.

EBay, which began as an auction-only site, already facilitates instant sales of items, both through Half.com, a site it acquired in 2000, and through the "Buy It Now" option, which accounts for one-third of all items listed on eBay.

With "Buy it Now," sellers can list an item at a set price, and the sale ends if someone offers to pay that price. If someone enters a bid below that price, the "Buy It Now" option is canceled, and the sale turns into a regular auction.

Buy It Now will remain, but now sellers have another option: selling their items at a fixed price, with no auction entering the picture under any circumstances. Either the product sells for the listed price or not at all.

The move had been requested by users who wanted a true fixed-price format, eBay spokesman Kevin Pursglove said.

The refinement also figures to appeal to traditional retailers and other companies that are increasingly unloading products on eBay.

Bill Would Give Small Webcasters Royalty Relief

One day before Congress adjourned for its summer break, several lawmakers introduced a bill that would let small Internet broadcasters defer royalty payments that could drive them out of business.

The measure would give small "Webcasters" a new lease on life by allowing them to defer royalty payments to musicians and recording companies until a new round of negotiations begins next year.

But the bill must advance quickly as Congress has only one more month of activity scheduled before the fall elections.

Conventional radio stations have long been exempt from paying royalties to recording artists and anyone else who owns the rights to the "sound recording" of a song, but Congress said sound-recording owners should get paid for Internet transmission when it updated copyright laws for the digital era in 1995 and 1998.

The Library of Congress established a rate of 0.07 cents per listener per song in June, which means that small Webcasters like Beethoven.com and broadcast giants like Clear Channel Communications Inc. that "stream" online broadcasts would be on the hook for 70 cents for each song played to an audience of 1,000 listeners.

Webcasters say the rate is too high, and several have already announced that they will shut their doors because their royalty bill will exceed their income.

Virginia Democratic Rep. Rick Boucher, the bill's primary sponsor, said his legislation would allow Webcasters with annual revenues of less than \$6 million to keep broadcasting until royalty negotiations start up again next year.

"The goal is simply to give them life support until they get to the next round," Boucher said.

Larger Webcasters would still be obligated to pay the established royalty rate as well as royalties for past broadcasts dating back to 1998, he said.

The bill would also allow small Webcasters to participate in royalty negotiations without paying arbitrators' fees, and would exempt them from royalty payments on "ephemeral" buffer copies of songs that are stored on Internet servers but never heard by the public.

It would also free U.S. Copyright Office arbitrators to consider what effect any royalty-rate decision would have on the industry, rather than modeling their decision only on other agreements reached between Webcasters and content owners.

Boucher acknowledged that Congress has little time to consider the bill, but maintained that it could pass if enough Internet users spoke up.

"Congress can act with tremendous dispatch when there is a will to do so," he said.

The Digital Media Association, which includes Webcasters, said the bill "provides reprieve from bankruptcy for thousands of small Internet radio companies, and that corrects significant problems with the royalty arbitration process that imposed a devastatingly high cost on the nascent Internet radio industry."

A spokesman for some copyright owners said the bill would prevent musicians from getting fair pay for their work.

"These Webcasters are businesses. ... Why shouldn't they pay fair market value for the music which is the very core of that business?" said John Simson, executive director of SoundExchange.

The bill, which has 10 co-sponsors, will be referred to the Small Business and the Judiciary committees.

Privacy Advocates Urge Use of States' Common Laws

With consumer-privacy efforts stalled in Congress, one expert is arguing that those who fear that intimate details of their private lives could be exposed already have plenty of protection through existing common law.

More than one hundred years of civil lawsuits in courtrooms around the country have provided a broad understanding of privacy rights, allowing consumers to sue for damages and encouraging companies to refrain from invasive practices, said Jim Harper, editor of the conservative think tank Privacilla.org.

In a report due to be released on Tuesday, Harper argues that lawsuits -- or the fear of lawsuits -- have largely held abusive marketing practices in check, while allowing companies to develop new techniques that result in savings for the consumer.

"State privacy torts provide explicit baseline protections for privacy at the same time as they allow innovative new uses of information to occur. For the most part, they have been unsung as privacy-protecting laws in the United States," Harper said in the report, which he will present at a meeting of state legislators later in the week.

Other experts say that while civil suits can be effective, they only provide a partial solution and must be augmented by laws that prevent abuses from happening in the first place.

Consumers are often reluctant to undertake expensive and time-consuming lawsuits in which damages are difficult to prove, they say, meaning that many violations go unpunished.

"I do think that lawsuits terrify companies more than (legislative laws) do ... but it's an adjunct, it's not a total solution," said Robert Ellis Smith, publisher of Privacy Journal.

The concept of a right to be left alone first arose in an 1890 Harvard Law Review article in response to new technologies like the camera and mass media that could expose an individual's private details. Computers, the Internet and other new information technologies have increased concerns exponentially over the past 30 years.

Congress has passed laws that place limits on how companies can share consumers' medical and financial information, and lawmakers have introduced dozens of bills that target online information-collecting practices in this session.

One measure has passed out of the Senate Commerce Committee over the

objection of many high-tech firms, but insiders say it is unlikely to become law this year as time runs short and homeland security, corporate reform, and prescription drugs dominate the agenda.

In the House of Representatives, key Republicans have lined up behind a bill but it has yet to move out of subcommittee.

Harper said consumers will be better off without laws that could stifle innovation and prove unenforceable. The common law built up through the courts is a better mechanism to curb marketplace abuses, he said.

"I never have litigated a single case, but I've benefited from other litigation," he said.

Marc Rotenberg, executive director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center said that common law can be an effective tool, pointing out that the privacy-rights group had argued in New Hampshire that it should be extended to cover brokers who collect and sell personal information.

But common law should not be the sole basis for privacy protections because the outcome of court cases is not predictable, Rotenberg said.

"It's in the interest of businesses as well as consumers to create frameworks where the collection and use of personal information will occur in a regulated environment," he said.

U.S. Cyber-Security Efforts Faulted

Years after orders from the White House to beef up the security of the nation's most important computer systems, the government is having trouble identifying which organizations should be involved and how they should be coordinated, according to a new report.

President Bush's recent proposal to create a Cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security said at least 12 organizations oversee protection of important infrastructure. But the General Accounting Office, the investigating arm of Congress, said it identified at least 50 organizations already involved in such efforts, usually focused on protecting vital computer networks.

The GAO said those groups include five advisory committees, six organizations under the White House, 38 groups under executive agencies and three others. Within the Defense Department alone, the GAO found seven organizations.

Those numbers might go up. Richard Clarke, the chairman of Bush's cyber-security protection board, said the Sept. 11 terror attacks and their aftermath have caused the administration to consider broadening definitions of critical infrastructure to include national monuments and chemical industries.

"We have learned from the tragedy on Sept. 11 that our enemies will increasingly strike where they believe we are vulnerable," said Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., who asked for the GAO report as chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee. "As this report shows, our cyberspace infrastructure is ripe for attack today."

Clarke also noted that most of the networks needing protection are owned by private companies, universities, state and local governments and even home computer users. "This presents a unique strategic challenge," Clarke said in a letter to the GAO.

The government previously defined critical infrastructures to include banks, hospitals, water and food supplies, communications networks, energy and transportation systems and the postal system.

The GAO report warned that the problem can't be solved at least until it's defined well. "The opportunity for ensuring that all relevant organizations are addressed exists in the development of the new national strategy," it said.

Even organizations already involved are slowly discovering the scope of the problems from an increasingly interconnected world. An early warning network for the nation's food manufacturers recently decided it needed to coordinate with the Interior Department because that agency controls many of the country's water supplies and hydroelectric dams for electricity.

The GAO also noted that it was nearly impossible to know how much the U.S. government was spending on the protection of its infrastructure, because the organizations involved don't receive money for specific projects and don't track such spending.

Web Filtering Lawsuit Challenges U.S. Copyright Law

A 22-year-old law student filed a lawsuit on Thursday asking a federal court in Boston to let him crack the digital lock on software that filters Internet Web sites so that he and others can view blocked sites, some of which he says are useful to the public.

The suit, filed by the New York-based American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of Ben Edelman, challenges the controversial Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) of 1998. The law prohibits creation or distribution of tools that can be used to unlock digital copyright protections.

Edelman, who will enter Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the fall and is a technology analyst at The Berkman Center for Internet & Society there, claims the filtering software is flawed and blocks legitimate Web sites rather than just the pornographic sites it purports to target.

"The core reason filtering software is of concern at the moment is because it is being forced upon a substantial number of Americans as they attempt to use the Internet in their local public libraries, public schools, businesses and even in their homes," Edelman told Reuters.

For example, a product from Seattle-based N2H2 Inc., named as the defendant in the lawsuit, blocks breast cancer Web sites and others with vital public health information, such as the Asian Community Aids Services organization, Edelman said.

The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), which took effect in 2001, requires that public libraries and schools receiving federal funds use filtering software on their Internet-connected computers.

The ACLU challenged the library provision of that law in a lawsuit filed in March 2001. A Pennsylvania federal judge overturned the law in May 2002 and the case is on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Edelman wants to publish the list of blocked sites and distribute software that would enable others to see the Web sites. The lawsuit argues that it is within his "fair use" rights under the U.S. Constitution to do research on the software.

Filtering software is also being used by governments in other countries to censor and restrict access to the Internet for politically motivated reasons, including China, Vietnam, Uzbekistan and Saudi Arabia, Edelman said.

He said his research found that Saudi Arabia had restricted access to Web pages including the "woman" entry from the Encyclopedia Britannica," and the Amnesty International site.

N2H2 is one of the companies vying for a contract to supply Saudi Arabia with blocking software, the ACLU said.

Part of the lawsuit challenges N2H2's software license agreement, which prohibits customers from decrypting or otherwise reverse engineering the software.

The lawsuit claims the license agreement is unenforceable because by installing the product the customer is forced to automatically consent to the terms of the agreement and cannot negotiate, Ann Beeson, ACLU lead counsel on the case, told Reuters.

N2H2 spokesman David Burt told Reuters, "We believe our software licenses are valid and we do intend to defend them and our intellectual property."

Other DMCA challenges have not held up.

An appellate judge dismissed a lawsuit filed by a Princeton professor who feared recording companies would sue him over research into digital music copyright protections. And movie studios successfully sued Eric Corley after he published software to decrypt DVDs on his hacker Web site, 2600.

In another case, trial is set to begin Aug. 26 for Moscow-based ElcomSoft Co. Ltd., which was sued for selling software to unlock copyright protections on digital books.

Bill Lets Music Firms Hack Napster-Like Systems

Media companies would be allowed to sabotage Napster-style networks to prevent songs, movies and other copyrighted materials from being swapped over the Internet under a bill introduced in Congress on Thursday.

The bill would permit recording companies and other copyright holders to hack onto networks to thwart users looking to download free music, and would protect them from lawsuits from users.

Although Congress has little time to debate the bill before the August

recess, sponsor Rep. Howard Berman, a California Democrat, said the measure was necessary because the decentralized systems were impossible to shut down.

"No legislation can eradicate the problem of peer-to-peer piracy. However, enabling copyright creators to take action to prevent an infringing file from being shared via P2P (peer-to-peer) is an important first step," Berman said in remarks on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Many large record labels have already resorted to a method known as "spoofing," where they hire firms to distribute "decoy" files that are empty or do not work in order to frustrate would-be downloaders of movies and music.

Additionally, sources have said the major recording companies, like Bertelsmann AG BMG, EMI Group Plc, Vivendi Universal and Sony Corp are considering taking a new tack by suing individuals who use the services, rather than the companies that host them.

The industry's trade group, the Recording Industry Association of America, on Thursday welcomed the bill.

"We applaud Congressman Berman for introducing bipartisan legislation that takes an innovative approach to combating the serious problem of Internet piracy," said Hilary Rosen, chairman and chief executive officer of the RIAA.

"Online piracy undermines the growth of legitimate music sites and hurts all consumers in the long run. Every dollar lost to piracy is a dollar that cannot be invested in fresh, new artists we have all come to expect and enjoy," said Rosen.

The bill does not specify what measures copyright owners could take to foil online song swapping, but does impose some limits on their efforts.

Copyright owners would only be able to stop the trading of their own songs, and would be required to notify users and the Justice Department (news - web sites) when they took action.

Overzealous companies could face a government ban and lawsuits from users who suffered economic harm.

The recording industry blames rampant online piracy for a decline in CD sales last year and has prosecuted online networks aggressively.

But while the industry succeeded in shutting down the pioneer Napster service last summer, other less centralized networks like Kazaa and Morpheus continue to attract millions of users.

"The current landscape for online music is dangerously one-sided, with the peer-to-peer pirates enjoying an unfair advantage," Rosen of the RIAA said.

"It makes sense to clarify existing laws to ensure that copyright owners -- those who actually take the time and effort to create an artistic work -- are at least able to defend their works from mass piracy," Rosen said.

Members of the movie industry also embraced the initiative, but not entirely.

"We're pleased that a bipartisan group of lawmakers .. want to curb the explosion of Internet piracy," said Jack Valenti, president and chief executive officer of the Motion Picture Association of America, in a statement.

"However, there are aspects of the bill we believe need changing as it moves through the legislative process. We look forward to working with Congress in this regard," he said.

A spokesman for Valenti was not immediately available to elaborate.

New Spam Blocker Unveiled

A South Florida company said Wednesday that it has produced a new type of spam blocker that relies on the validity of the sender's e-mail address rather than on filtering. Extreme Programming Inc.'s "E-mail Bouncer" uses an automatic confirmation system that will accept e-mail messages only from verifiable e-mail addresses.

Legitimate e-mail addresses are confirmed with a single click, the company said. Once the address has been confirmed, future e-mails from the confirmed source will get through unhampered.

Spam is generally sent from false or otherwise unverifiable e-mail addresses, and it is sent in unattended batches.

Most spam-fighting products on the market involve some sort of filtering technology and scan for certain keywords in the subject line or body. Quality varies, but most allow at least some spam through and block a certain amount of legitimate e-mail.

"Ours is different because it actually verifies the sender's e-mail address," Aaron Jay Lieberman, who developed the E-mail Bouncer software, told NewsFactor.

"The message is put in a pending list and then the message is sent back to the sender from the system, telling them that my e-mail address is protected," he said.

The sender is given a link asking them to confirm their address, and when they click it they receive a message telling them it has been confirmed, Lieberman added. The system lets the network know the address is a legitimate, working e-mail address and only then puts the message in the recipient's in-box. The process typically takes about five minutes.

E-Mail Bouncer is based on the fact that many, though not all, spam senders use illegitimate, often stolen, e-mail addresses.

The program's control panel allows users to see all of their pending messages, which are erased after 30 days if not confirmed. Addresses, including the domain names of specific companies, can be added manually to the "valid" list.

Extreme Programming's service starts at US\$5 per month for 1,000 e-mails, and the company offers an "unlimited" package for \$10.

With the extremely cheap cost of sending spam, experts do not expect the annoying phenomenon to go away in the foreseeable future. Of an estimated 30 million e-mails sent per day, an average of 30 percent is spam, according to industry estimates.

The cost to businesses and consumers is heavy. The European Commission estimates that spam costs Internet users \$8.7 billion worldwide on an annual basis.

The issue of spam has attracted the attention of lawmakers. So far, 25 states in the United States have passed laws governing spam, and a number of federal bills are pending.

For example, Virginia representative Bob Goodlatte is sponsoring the Anti-Spamming Act of 2001, introduced last year but delayed because of the attacks on September 11th. The law would make it illegal for e-mail marketers to use other people's e-mail addresses to send spam.

And the Unsolicited Commercial Mail Act of 2001, sponsored by Representative Heather Wilson of New Mexico, would give consumers, the Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general the right to sue spammers for \$500 for each unwanted e-mail.

Tips Offered for Preventing Spam

By Larry Blasko, Associated Press Writer

It's not exactly poisoning village wells, but those who generate the tons of bogus and unwanted e-mail messages known as "spam" ought to suffer some appropriate punishment in the hereafter; perhaps having a demon devoted to stuffing flaming pine cones up their personal inbox.

In the meantime, those of us who originally switched to e-mail to avoid the junk that came with snail-mail can at least do a few things to get the electronic equivalent of a flea infestation down to manageable proportions.

There's a variety of spam-blocking software available, but there are also things that can be done before you spend any money. Viral Tripathi, a guru in the Associated Press Management Information Systems department recently distributed an internal memo on actions you can take to reduce spam. His suggestions are worth sharing.

First, Tripathi said, never respond to unsolicited e-mail. To the perps, that's exactly what they were looking for, a pair of eyeballs.

Second, don't believe those instructions that say you'll get off the list if you reply using the word "remove." Tripathi says that just identifies you as a live one and you'll get on ever more lists. Well it might be unsettling that marketers would deliberately try to deceive you, it's true nonetheless and oh, by the way, the check is in the mail.

In a similar vein, Tripathi cautions against signing up on Web sites that promise to get you off spam lists. They might be sites that collect addresses and sell the same.

As much as you can, avoid any public display of your e-mail address. Spammers use programs called "bots" that surf the Web looking for addresses.

And finally, Tripathi says, if you are a member of any group or service that maintains a directory, see if you can opt out. Kind of like an unpublished phone number.

Following these suggestions won't eliminate all spam, but it will reduce the flow.

And why is that good and what's so wrong about spam anyway?

Spam is more than just the junk mail that the post office delivers.

With snail-mail, the junk mailer pays the postage for the delivery. On e-mail, you pay for the connection and often, the storage for stuff you didn't want in the first place. That's theft.

From time to time, various politicians propose legal remedies and the chance of any of those becoming law, much less being widely enforced, is anyone's guess.

As for the spam-blocking software, most of it works within limitations, one of which is that like computer virus-prevention software, if it's not constantly updated, the perps will surely work ways around it.

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